United Nations E/CN.6/2003/NGO/10

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
13 January 2003

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-seventh session
3-14 March 2003
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by the American Association of Retired Persons, International Alliance of Women, International Council of Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhoods Centres, International Federation on Ageing, Soroptimist International, Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; Bahá'í International Community, International Federation of University Women, International Federation of Women Lawyers, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, League of Women Voters of the United States, National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Pan-Pacific Southeast Asian Women's Association International, Trickle Up Program, United States Committee for UNIFEM, World Young Women's Christian Association, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; Altrusa International, Armenian International Women's Association, United Nations Association of the USA, non-governmental organizations on the Roster

* E/CN.6/2003/1.

03-21040 (E) 030203

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

We, the international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and members of the NGO Committee on UNIFEM, both applaud and direct your attention to the special efforts of UNIFEM on the two thematic issues of the forty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women: (i) Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communication technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women; and (ii) women's human rights and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls as defined in the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Moreover, UNIFEM's leadership and substantive programmes in these areas strengthen the work of our own organizations.

Women's human rights are central to all UNIFEM programmes. UNIFEM continues to focus their work in relation to human rights through concentrating on three areas:

- Eliminating violence against girls and women of all ages by investing in prevention, protection and advocacy strategies
- Assisting in the effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Enhancing the understanding of Governments, advocates and United Nations partners of the intersection between human rights, gender and HIV/AIDS to strengthen responses to the epidemic.

UNIFEM's support of initiatives to end violence against women links innovation and replication. The Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women serves as a grant-making laboratory for new and innovative strategies and best practices. Since it began, the Trust Fund has allocated more than $7 million in 73 countries. Lessons learned from the Trust Fund are fed into national, regional and global programmes that UNIFEM's field network and partners develop into longer-term, high-impact strategies to end violence against women. A further key focus of UNIFEM initiatives is to build an enabling environment for ending violence against women through promoting new and strengthened legislation.

UNIFEM's efforts on CEDAW have focused on increasing the effectiveness of reporting, monitoring and implementation and strengthening the capacity of and partnerships between Governments and NGOs to use the Convention to create stronger legal and policy frameworks for gender equality.

UNIFEM's Programme of Action on Gender, Human Rights and HIV/AIDS is aimed at putting the gender and human rights dimensions of the epidemic at the centre of government, United Nations agency and NGO strategies, programmes and policies. In this context, UNIFEM supports the building of capacity in mainstreaming gender and HIV/AIDS, works at the community level to impact on women's lives and brings the voices of women, both infected and affected by HIV,

to national, regional and global arenas. UNIFEM is the co-chair, with the United Nations Population Fund, of the Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender and HIV/AIDS.

In the area of women and media, UNIFEM produces and supports diverse and expanding strategies for developing and disseminating media and materials to inform, inspire, and build connections between women's rights advocates regionally and nationally. UNIFEM supports gender training and networking on gender issues for journalists in various parts of the world. UNIFEM published "Picturing a Life Free of Violence", consolidating and highlighting a selection of successful communication strategies and media materials used to combat violence against women around the world.

UNIFEM, along with the Division for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, was a founding organization of WomenWatch — the United Nations electronic network for information on gender and women. UNIFEM maintains its own newsletter, *Currents*, which informs readers of UNIFEM's cutting edge work for women worldwide and is also available electronically.

UNIFEM sponsors opportunities in information technologies for women. Two innovative examples are a partnership with CISCO Systems and the Jordanian Government that is developing curricula based on the assessed needs and interests of young women and WINNER II, a global training for women entrepreneurs to sell their products online.

The NGO Committee on UNIFEM wholeheartedly endorses the effective and important work being done by UNIFEM towards gender equality, peace and development, and urges increased financial support from Member States and NGOs alike. UNIFEM's partnerships with UNDP country offices have increased 12 per cent in the last year; however, $16 million of requests from the Trust Fund could not be considered because of limited resources. We need the leadership of UNIFEM to continue to advance the human rights of women worldwide.